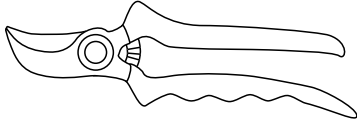


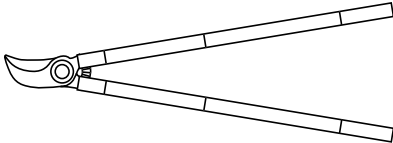
# Basic Pruning Guidelines



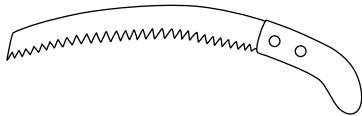
## Use the Correct Tools



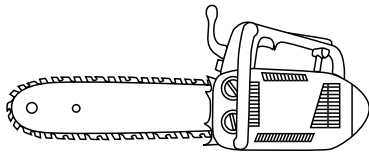
Hand pruners are useful for small branches, up to about 1/2-inch diameter. Use loppers or a saw for larger branches or for species with hardwood.



Long-handled loppers may be used to remove larger diameter branches, but precise cuts are more difficult to make.



Curved blade pruning saws cut on the pull stroke. Newer blade designs are able to cut large and small diameter branches quickly and cleanly. Pruning saws are available with fixed or folding blades, or mounted on a pole. Larger pruning saws are sometimes used by professionals.



Chainsaws are not recommended for general pruning except by professionals as a time saver. (Consider hiring an arborist for large or potentially dangerous work.)

## Timing is Important

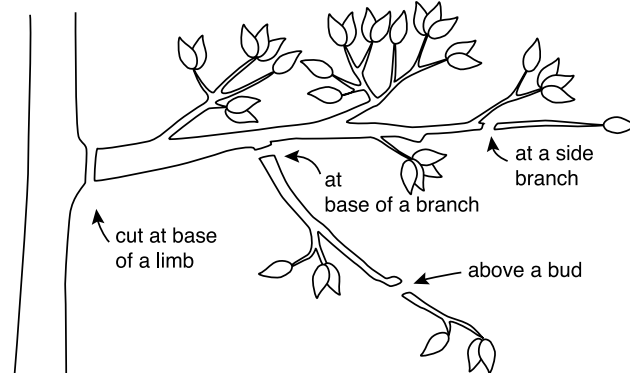
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Best Time	●	●										●
Worst Time				●	●							
Light Pruning	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●

To minimize damage and synchronize with the natural growth cycle, prune in winter (January, February). Avoid heavy pruning as leaves are expanding in early spring (April, May) when tree energy reserves are low. Timing for light pruning is less critical. For maximum display of spring flowering species, prune after bloom (June or later). Prune dead limbs and branches at any time.

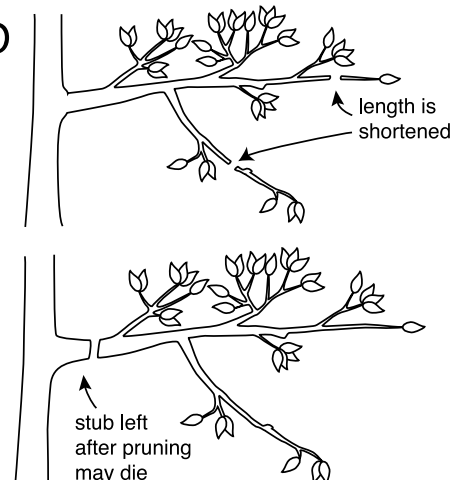
## Remove Whole Limbs or Branches

It is preferable to remove an entire limb or branch rather than to shorten its length. Branches may be cut back to a twig, or twigs to a bud, where new growth will resume. This technique respects natural growth patterns.

**YES**

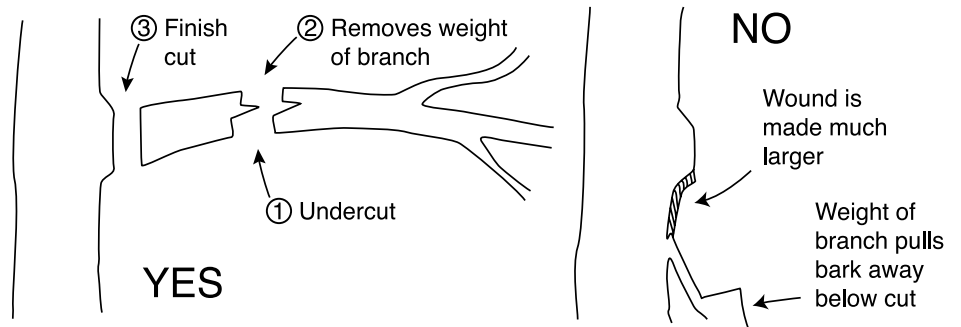


**NO**



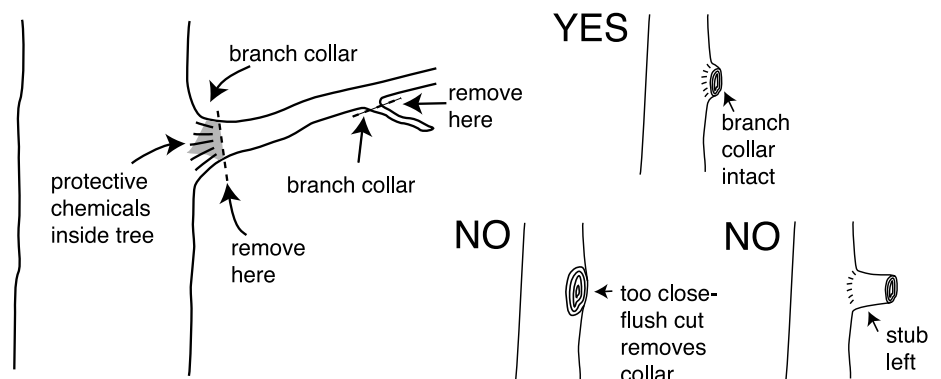
## Use the Three-Cut Method

Branches one inch in diameter or larger should generally be removed in a series of three cuts. This will prevent bark attached to the base of the cut branch from stripping away bark on the trunk as it falls.



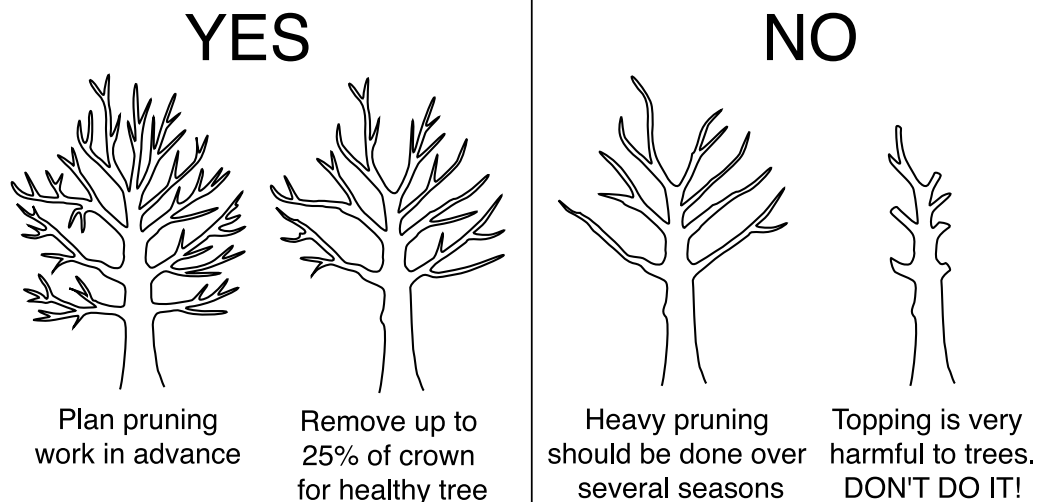
## Save Branch Collars

Trees produce natural chemicals to prevent decay from entering the tree at the base of each branch or limb. To preserve this chemical zone, leave the slight swelling, or branch collar, at the branch base. The resulting wound will be smaller than if the branch were cut flush. This rule applies to large limbs and small branches.



## Don't Overprune

It is best to remove only a small percentage of the live part of a tree at one time—a maximum of 25 percent in one year for healthy, vigorous trees. This will help maintain a balance between leaf area and other tree functions. Prune weak or declining trees less. Severe pruning may stimulate undesirable sprouting from the stem or roots. Avoid pruning over 25 percent of the live crown of any tree two years in succession.



## Prune Now and Avoid Future Problems

Use simple hand-pruning tools when a tree is young to prevent future structural problems and the need to remove large limbs later in its life. It is especially important to remove forked tops (double leaders), and to gradually remove lower branches for shade-tree development.

